

## **REMARKS**

Applicant has read and considered the Office Action dated July 12, 2004.

In the Action, the drawings were objected to for poor legibility and corrected drawings were required. The drawings were objected to because they failed to show the plate and rod, the conveyor and the longitudinal hole or slot as described in the specification. Moreover, the conveyor, heater, plate, curing area and controller in claim 5 must be shown or canceled. Applicant has included replacement drawing sheets showing changes that are believed to overcome the objections. Applicant asserts that the replacement sheets overcome the objections to the drawings.

Claims 5-11 were rejected as being non-enabling. The Examiner states that the heater in claim 5 has not been shown and it is not clear whether the "plurality of fingers" refers to the "tooth" in the specification or if the "plurality of fingers" is separate from the "tooth." The claims have been amended to verify the structure that was stated to be unclear.

Claims 5-11 were rejected as being indefinite. The Examiner states that claim 5 fails to recite interrelationships between the various structure and means. It was also stated that the means clause was unclear. There were also antecedent basis problems with regard to some of the recited structure. Claim 5 has been amended and is believed to overcome the indefiniteness rejections.

Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Cromeens et al.* in view of *Hill*. Claim 5 has been amended and recites *inter alia* means for applying longitudinal pressure being a multi-finger joint pressing machine located at the entrance of the curing area, said multi-finger joint pressing machine including a transversal support bar being movable between a retracted position and an operative position, said support bar being provided with a plurality of teeth extending under the support bar and longitudinally towards the output area, whereby when said support bar is in said retracted position, said floorboard can be conveyed into said curing area, and when said support bar is in said operative position, said fingers engage a top portion of said floorboard in order to apply downward and longitudinal

**Amendments to the Drawings:**

The sheets of drawings attached in the Appendix includes improved quality drawing sheets for Figures 1-9 and changes to Figures 10A, 11B, 13A, 13B and 13C. These sheets replace the original sheets.

pressure to said wood strips and thereby force said finger joints to close; and a controller for controlling operation of said apparatus whereby when said floorboard has been assembled in said assembly area, said controller activates said conveyor to place a leading edge of said floorboard in said press, then activating a curing cycle by said controller subsequently placing said multi-finger jointing machine in said operative position and placing said press in said pressing position in order to cure said floorboard, said controller placing said multi-finger jointing machine in said retracted position and placing said press in said retracted position, said controller activating said conveyor to convey said cured floorboard to said output area and repeating said curing cycle for another portion of said floorboard. Applicant asserts that the recited structure is neither shown nor suggested by *Cromeens* or any of the other prior art. Applicant asserts that claim 5 distinguishes over the prior art and is in condition for allowance.

The Office Action stated that claim 6 contains allowable subject matter but would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the §112 rejections and to include all the limitations of the base claim. Claim 6 depends from claim 5, which is now believed to be allowable. Applicant asserts that claim 6 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 7-11 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims and to overcome the §112 rejection. As stated above, claim 5 is believed to be in condition for allowance and Applicants assert that claims 7-11 are also allowable. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter.

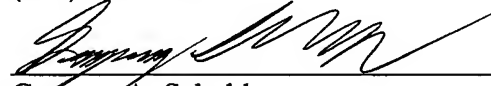
A speedy and favorable action on the merits is hereby solicited. If the Examiner feels that a telephone interview may be helpful in this matter, please contact Applicant's representative at (612) 336-4728.

Respectfully submitted,

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